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THE

DISCREET
PRINCESS;

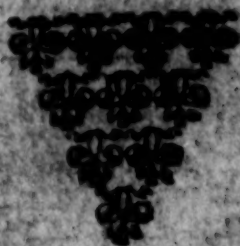
OR, THE

ADVENTURES

OF

FINETTA.

A NOVEL.



LONDON: Printed in the Year, 1755.

THE GREEK

PRINCE

OF

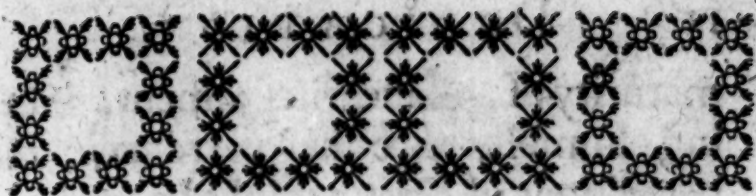
ADVENTURE

OF

THE



LONDON: Printed in the Year 1755



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LADY
MARY MONTAGU.

Daughter to the most high, most
puissant, and most noble Prince,
JOHN Duke of MONTAGU, &c.

MADAM,

THE agreeable and pretty
Novel, which I take the li-
berty to present to your La-
dyship, was dedicated in the
original, to the Countess of *Murat*, a
lady, whom the author justly compli-
ments on account of her uncommon
delicacy of taste in this way of writing,
and who was also celebrated for her fine
compositions of this nature, in rhyme
and poetic number, and consequently of
A 2 maturity

maturity of age and discernment; assuring himself, thro' her patronage, the perfections of *Finetta* might be rendered the more diffusive and agreeably entertaining.

But if the *Discreet Princess* believed herself happy in being made known to that fine Lady, infinitely more so must she, necessarily, judge herself to be in the acquaintance of your Ladyship; and a kind reception from so bright a personage, in whose veins concentrates the blood of Princess; of so strict and intimate consanguinity with the most consummate Hero in world, the terror of the arbitrary sway, the conservator of the liberties of nations, the *Great*, the *Victorious*, the *Invincible*; from a Lady in whom shines forth such superior merit and perfection, with such inimitable splendor, as would be vain and fruitless in me to attempt their praise or description any more than those of your illustrious parents; the one, by a continued Series of Actions truly grand and noble, like the son of *Vespasian*, the delight of mankind; and the other, where-ever present, by charms

D E D I C A T I O N.

V

charms of mind and person all transcendent and divine, the life, soul and spirit, peculiar ornament and admiration.

But persons of polite and refined tastes, of rare and elevated qualities of soul, have, in all ages, taken singular delight in such productions of the mind, as this which I have now the honour to offer to your perusal; since, tho' they are intirely fabulous, they wrap up and infold most excellent morality, which is the very end, and ultimate scope and design of fable: And this, MADAM, is what you will find in the following Novel.

It turns upon two points, and your Ladyship will thereby see how our fore-fathers knew to insinuate into young minds, that we fall into an infinity of disorders, when we amuse ourselves in doing nothing; or, to speak more plainly, that *Idleness is the Mother of all Vice*; and you will undoubtedly be pleased with their manner of persuasion, which is, that we should be always on our guard; or, in other terms, that *Distrust is the Mother of Security*.

I.

*Love never triumphs over any heart,
 Nor wounds it with his keen resistless dart,
 But when 'tis not imploy'd:
 Take sage advice, ye blooming beauties,
 then
 Beware the nets, and luring snares of men,
 Who love you uninjoy'd.
 And if you truly are afraid,
 Your reason should be dup'd, betray'd,
 And captive to a pleasant conqu'ror made,
 Necessity requires that you should find
 Suiting emloyment to ingage the mind.*

II.

*But if in spite of all your care, it prove,
 To be your lot and destiny to love,
 Take heed you are not charm'd till well
 you know
 Him upon whom you would your heart
 bestow;
 All pleas'd he should its sovereign lord be-
 come.
 For on his point depends your final doom.*

III.

III.

*Dread, as sure enemies to your repose,
 The bane of purity, and virtue's foes;
 Those gaudy things, potent in arms of
 dress;
 Who haunt your toilets, and do you caress
 With ogling simp'ring airs, you do not
 know
 With pertinent discourse the fair to move,
 But languish, and delusive glances throw.
 And sigh and die, but never truly love.*

IV.

**Next these (and be it your peculiar care)
 Another class of hypocrites beware,
 Who say sweet things, with luring tongue
 they move,
 Flourish amain, and ditties tune of love.
 Sound well the bottom of their souls; they
 cry
 To every pretty little Celia they
 Incounter at assemblies, park or play,
 The same gay tinsel toys of am'rous
 trumpery.*

V.

*Distrust, in fine, those lovers warm,
Who briskly tell you that your beauties charm,
The very moment they first see your eyes;
They're all on fire, their soul with fervor
dies;*

*Vollies of oaths discharge their lively flame;
They talk of nothing, but of bleeding hearts,
And dire effects of Cupid's fatal darts;
But laugh at these vain oaths; the cheat's
the same.*

*Well, as it truly ought, a heart to gain
Requires some time, and not a little pain.
Take, therefore heed, lest some small
complaisance*

*Does not too soon, your destiny advance;
You of your necessary pride disarm,
And to irreparable ruin charm:
For, on a just distrust, and right address,
Security depends, and future joy and peace.*

Your Ladyship* will pardon this little fally of rhyme; the digression is not *mal-a-pro-pus*: but not to detain you, MADAM, any longer, I implore your attention, and thus begin my Tale.

THE



T H E
D I S C R E E T
P R I N C E S S.

IN the time of the first Crusades, a certain king in *Europe* (where his kingdom lay I know not) resolved to make war against the infidels in *Palestine*. Before he undertook so long a journey, he put his kingdom into such good order, and the regency into the hands of so able a minister, that he was intirely easy upon that account.

What most disquieted this Prince, was the care of his family. His queen had not been long dead. She left him no son; but he saw himself farther of three young princeesses, all marriageable. My chronicle does not inform me what were their true names: I only know,

10 *The Discreet Princess.*

that as, in those happy times, the honest simplicity of the people gave very freely surnames to eminent persons, according to their good and bad qualities; the eldest of these Princesses they named *Dronilla*, signifying, in our modern stile; idle, the second *Pratilia*, implying talkative; and the third *Finetta*; names which had all of them a just relation to the characters of these three sisters.

Never was any person known so indolent as *Dronilla*; she never waked every day till one in the afternoon: she was dragged all along to church in the same condition as when she got out of her bed; her night-clothes all tumbled, her gown loose, no girdle; and very often a slipper of one sort, and one of another. They used to rectify this mistake before night; but they could never prevail upon this Princess to go any otherwise than in slippers: it was a most insupportable fatigue to put on shoes. So soon as she had dined, she sat down to her toilet, where she continued till evening; the rest of her
time,

The Discreet Princess. 11

time, till midnight, she employed at play, and eating her supper: after that they were almost as long in pulling off her cloathes, as they had been in putting them on; she could never be persuaded to go to bed till it was broad-day.

Pratilia led quite another sort of a life. This Princess was very brisk and active, and employed very little time about her Person; but she had such a strange itching to talk, that from the very moment she waked, till the time she fell asleep again, her mouth was never shut. She knew the history of all things; ill managements, tender compacts, the gallantries and intrigues, not only of the whole court, but of the meanest cits. She kept a register of all those wives who pinched their families at home, to appear the finer abroad, and was exactly informed what such a countess's woman, and such a marquis's steward gained. The better to be instructed in all these little affairs, she gave audience to her nurse and mantua-maker, with greater plea-

sure than she would to any ambassador; and when she had got any thing new, she tired every-body with repeating to them these fine stories, from the king her father, down to the footmen; for, provided she could but talk, she did not care to whom it was. This itch of talking, produced yet another bad effect of this Princess; for, notwithstanding her high rank, her too familiar airs imboldened the pert sparks about the court to talk of love to her. She heard their speeches without any ceremony, purely to have the pleasure of answering them; for, from morning till night, whatever it might cost her, she must either hear others tattle, or tattle herself. Never did *Pratilia*, any more than *Dronilla*, ever employ herself in thinking, reflecting, or reading. She never troubled herself about household matters, or the amusements of her spindle or needle. In short, these two sisters lived in perfect idleness, as well of mind as of body.

The youngest of these three Princesses was of a quite different character:

Her

The Discreet Princess. 13

Her thoughts and hands were continually employed: She was of a surprising vivacity, and she applied it to good uses. She danced, sung and played upon music to perfection; finished, with wonderful address and skill, all those little works of the hand, which generally amuse those of her sex. She put the king's household into exact regulation and order, and, by her care and vigilance, hindered the pilferings, of the lower officers; for even in those days princes were cheated by those about them.

Her talents were not bounded there: She had a great deal of judgment, and such a wonderful presence of mind, that she immediately found the means of extricating herself out of the greatest difficulties. This young Princess had by her penetration, discovered a dangerous snare which a perfidious ambassador had laid for the king her father, in a treaty just ready to be signed by that prince. To punish the treachery of this ambassador and his master, the king altered the article of the treaty, and

14 *The Discreet Princess.*

and by working it in the terms his daughter dictated to him, he, in his turn, deceived the deceiver himself. The Princess moreover discovered a vile piece of roguery which a certain minister had a mind to play the king; and by the advice she gave her father, he so managed it, that the perfidity of that traytor fell upon his own head. The Princess gave, on several other occasions such marks of her penetration, and fine genius, that the people gave her the surname of *Finetta*.

The king loved her far above his other daughters, and depended so much upon her good sense, that, if he had no other child but her, he would have begun his journey with no manner of uneasiness; but he as much distrusted the conduct of his other daughters, as he relied upon that of *Finetta*. And so to be assured of the steps his family might take in his absence, as he was of those of his subjects, he took such measures as I am now going to relate.

I make no doubt (charming lady) but you, who are so knowing in mat-
ters

ters of antiquity, have heard a hundred times of the wonderful power of fairies. The king I speak of, having great intimacy with one of these able women, went to visit his said friend, whom he acquainted with the uneasiness he was in about his daughters. *It is not (said he) that the two eldest, whom I am uneasy about, have ever done the least thing contrary to their duty: but they have so little sense, are so imprudent, and live so very idly, that I fear, in my absence, they will ingage in some foolish intrigue or other, merely to amuse themselves. As for Finetta, I am sure of her virtue; however, I shall treat her as I did her sisters, to make no distinction; for which reason, sage fairy, I desire you to make three distaffs of glass for my daughters, to be made with such art, that each of them may not fail to break, so soon as she to whom it belongs, does any thing contrary to her honour.*

As this fairy was one of the most expert, she gave that prince three enchanted distaffs so made as to answer his design; but he was not content with

16 *The Discreet Princess.*

with this precaution. He put the Princesses into a tower vastly high, and with stood in a very solitary and desert place. The king told his daughters, *That he commanded them to take up their residence in that tower during his absence, and charged them not to admit into it any person whatsoever.* He took from them all their officers and servants of both sexes; and, after having presented them with the enchanted distaffs, the qualities of which he told them, he kissed the princesses locked the doors of the tower, of which he took himself the keys and departed.

You will perhaps believe, madam, that these princesses were now in danger of perishing with hunger. Not at all. Care was taken to fix a pulley to one of the windows of the tower: there ran a rope thro it, to which the princesses tied a basket, which they let down daily. In this basket was put every day provisions, which when they had drawn up, they carefully carried away the rope to their chamber.

Dronilla

The Discreet Princess. 17

Dronilla and *Pritilia* led such a life, in this solitude, as filled them with despair; they fretted themselves to such a degree as was beyond expression; but they were forced to have patience; for their distaffs were represented to them so terrible, that they were afraid the least step, tho' never so little awry or equivocal, might break them.

As for *Finetta*, she was not in the least out of humour: her spindle, needle, and music, furnished her with sufficient amusement; and besides this by order of the minister who then governed the state, there was care taken to put into their basket letter which informed the Princesses of whatever passed, either within or out of the kingdom. The king allowed it should be so; and the minister, to make his court to the Princesses, did not fail of being very exact as to this article. *Finetta* read all this news with great attention, and diverted herself with it; but as for her two sisters, they took no manner of notice of it; they said, *They were too much out of humour to amuse them-*

18 *The Discreet Princess.*

themselves with such trifles; they ought to have, at least, cards to divert their melancholy, during their father's absence.

Thus they passed their time in great disquiet, murmuring continually against their hard fortune; and, I suppose, they did not fail saying, that *it is much better to be born happy, than to be born the son of a king.* They were frequently at the windows of the tower, to see at least what passed in the country. One day as *Finetta* was busied in her chamber about some pretty work, her sister who were at the window, saw at the foot of the tower, a poor woman cloathed in rags and tatters, who cried out to them in a sorrowful tone, and in a very moving manner complained to them of her misery. She begged them, with her hands joined together, that they should let her come into the castle, telling them, *That she was a wretched stranger, who knew how to do a thousand things, and would serve them with the utmost fidelity.* At first, the Princesses called to mind their fathers orders, not to let any one come into the tower;

tower; but *Dronilla* was so weary of waiting upon herself, and *Pratilia* was so uneasy at having no-body to talk to but her sisters, that the earnest desire one had to be dressed piecemeal, and the eagerness of the other to have some-body else to chat with, made them resolve to let in this poor stranger.

Do you think (said *Pratilia* to her sister) *that the king's order extends to this unfortunate wretch? I believe we may take her in without any consequence. You may do, sister* (answered *Dronilla*) *what you please.* Then *Pratilia*, who only waited her consent, immediately let down the basket. The poor woman got into it, and the princesses drew her up by the help of the pully.

When they viewed this woman nearer them, the horrible nastiness of her cloathes turned their stomach. They would have given her others; but she told them, *she would change them the next day; but at present, she would think upon nothing but her work.* She was speaking these words when *Finetta* came into the room. This princess was strangely surprised

20 *The Discreet Princess.*

prized to see this unknown creature with her sisters. They told her the reasons which had induced them to draw her up. *Finetta*, who saw it was a thing done, dissembled her vexation at this impudent action.

In the mean time, this new servant of these Princesses took a hundred turns about the castle, under pretence of doing her work; but, in reality, to observe how things were disposed in it. For madam (and I am not sure you do not already begin to think so too) this pretended beggar-woman was as dangerous in this castle, as count *Ory* was in the nunnery, where he entered, being disguised like a fugitive abbess.

To keep your ladyship no longer in suspense, I shall tell you, madam, that this creature, so in tatters, was the son of a powerful king, a neighbour of the Princesses rather. This young prince was one of the most artful and designing person of his time, and governed intirely the king his father; which to do indeed required not much address; for that prince was of so sweet
and

and easy a character, that he had the surname given of the *Mild*, or *Gentle*, And as for this prince, who always acted with artifice and cunning, he was by the people surnamed *Rich-in-Craft*, but in shortness *Rich-Craft*.

He had a younger brother, who was as full of good qualities as he was of bad; however, notwithstanding their different tempers, there was between these two princes such strict union, that every body wondered at it. Besides the good qualities which the youngest prince was possessed of, the beauty of his face, and the gracefulness of his person, were so remarkable, that he was generally called *Bel-a-voir*. It was prince *Rich-Craft* who had put the ambassador of the king his father upon that wicked turn in the treaty, which was frustrated by the address of *Finetta*, and fell upon themselves. *Rich-Craft* who before that had no great love for the king, the Princesses father, since then bore him the utmost aversion; so that when he had notice of the precautions which that prince had taken in relation

22 *The Discreet Princess.*

lation to his daughters, he took a pernicious pleasure to deceive, if possible, the prudence of so suspicious a father. Accordingly *Rich-Craft* got leave of the king his father, to travel upon some invented pretense, and took such measures as gained him entrance into the tower where these Princesses were confined, as you have been informed.

In examining the castle, this prince observed, that it was very easy for the Princesses to make them be heard by people going in the roads; and he concluded, that it was best for him to continue in his disguise all day; because they could, if they had a mind to it, call out to passengers, and have him chastised for his rash enterprise. He therefore remained all day long in his tatters, and counterfeited a professed beggar-women; but all night, after the Princesses had supped, *Rich-Craft* threw off his rags, and shewed himself dressed like a cavalier in rich apparel, all covered with gold and jewels. The poor Princesses were so much frighten'd

at

at this sight, that they began to hasten from him with the utmost precipitation *Finetta* and *Pratilia*, who were very nimble, soon got to their chambers; but *Dronilla*, who scarce knew how to move, was by the prince presently overtaken.

He immediately threw himself at her feet, declaring who he was, and told her, *that the reputation of her beauty, and the sight of her picture, had induced him to leave a delightful court, to come and offer her his faith and vows.* *Dronilla* was so much at a loss, that she could not answer one word to the prince, who was still kneeling; but as, amidst a thousand tender endearments, with as many protestations, he ardently conjured her *to receive him that very moment for her husband*, her natural softness not suffering her to contend, she told *Rich-Craft*, in a very indolent and dronish tone, *that she believed him sincere, and accepted of his vows.* She observed no greater formalities than those, which were the conclusion of this marriage: But withal, she lost her distaff,

24 *The Discreet Princess.*

distaff, for it broke into a thousand pieces.

Mean while, *Pratilia* and *Finetta* were in strange uneasinesses. They had got away seperately into their apartments, and locked themselves in. These apartments were at some distance from each other; and as all three of these Princesses were ignorant of their sisters fate, they did not sleep one wink all the night long.

Next morning, the pernicious prince led *Dronilla* into the ground apartment which was at the end of the garden: where this princess told him how greatly she was disturbed about her sisters, tho' she dared not see them, for fear they should blame her for her marriage. The prince told her, he *would undertake they should approve of it*; and, after some discourse, went out, and locked *Dronilla* in, without her perceiving it, and then searched carefully every where to find out the Princesses. It was some time before he could discover in what chambers they had secured themselves: but at last, the strong inclination which

Pratilia

Pratillia had to be always prattling, causing this Princess to talk and bewail her destiny to herself, the Prince heard her, and coming up to the Door, saw her thro' the key hole.

Rich-Craft spoketo her thro' the door, saying to her the same he had told her sister; which was, *That it was only to offer her his faith and heart, which had caused him to undertake the enterprize of entering the bower.* He praised, not without excessive exaggeration, her wit and beauty; and *Pratillia*, who was fully perswaded in herself, that she was possessed of infinite merit, was foolish enough to believe all the prince told her. She answered him with a torrent of words, which were not over and above disobliging. Certainly this Princess must have had a strange fury of speech, to acquit herself as she did; for she was terribly faint, not having tasted a morsel all day, by reason she had nothing fit to eat in her chamber. As she was extremely lazy, and had no manner of thought of any thing but endless talking, she had not the least
B foresight:

26 *The Discreet Princess.*

forefight: When she wanted any thing, she had recourse to *Finetta*; and this amiable Princess, who was as laborious and provident as her sisters were the contrary, had always in her chamber great abundance of fine biscuits, pies, macaroons, with dried and wet sweetmeats of all sorts, and of her own making. *Pratilia* then, who had not the like advantage, finding herself at that time much pressed with hunger, and the protestations which the Prince made thro' the Door, opened it at last to that seducer, when he acted again the Comedian perfectly well, having well studied his part.

They then both went out of this apartment, and came into the office of the castle, where they found all sorts of refreshments; for the basket furnished the Princesses every day with more than enough. *Pratillia* could not help being still in pain for her sisters, and what might become of them; but it came into her head, I know not upon what foundation, that they were, doubtless, both locked up in *Finetta's* chamber, where they wanted for nothing.

Rich-

The Discreet Princess. 27

Rich-Craft used all the arguments he could to confirm her in this belief, and told her, *they would go and find out the Princesses towards evening.* She could not agree with him in that, but said, *They should go and seek after them so soon as they had done eating.*

In short, the Prince and Princess fell to very heartily; and when they had done, *Rich-Craft* desired to see the finest apartment in the Castle; he gave his hand to the Princess, who led him thither; and when he was there he began to exaggerate the tender passion he had for her, and the advantages she would have in marrying him. He told her, as he had done her sister *Dronilla*, *That she ought to accept of his faith that very moment; because, if she should see her sisters before she had taken him for her husband, they would not fail to oppose it; and being, without contradiction, one of the most powerful of the neighbouring princes, he would, most probably, seem to them a person fitter for her eldest sister than her, who would never consent to a match she herself might desire with all imaginable ardour.* *Pratilia*, after a deal of discourse,

28 *The Discreet Princess.*

which signifying nothing, was as extravagant as her sister had been; she excepted the Prince for her Husband, and never thought of the Effects of her glass distaff, till after this distaff was shattered in a hundred pieces.

Towards evening, *Pratilia* returned to her chamber with the Prince; and the first thing this Princess saw was her glass distaff all broken to bits: She was much troubled at this sight. The Prince asked her the reason of her concern. As her passion for babbling made her incapable of being silent on any score, she foolishly told *Rich-Craft* the mystery of the distaff; at which this Prince was wickedly overjoy'd, since the father of these Princesses would by this means be intirely convinced of the bad conduct of his daughters.

However *Pratillia* was no longer in the humour of going to look for her sisters. She had reason to fear they would not approve of her conduct; but the Prince offered himself to do this office, and told her, *He should find*

means

The Discreet Princess. 29

means to persuade them to approve of it. After this assurance, the Princess, who had not shut her eyes all night, grew very drowsy; and while she was sleeping, *Rich-Craft* turned the key upon her, as he had done before to *Dronilla*.

Is it not true, madam, that this *Rich-Craft* was a great villain, and these two Princesses weak and imprudent persons? I am very angry with such sort of folks, and doubt not but you are so too in a high degree; but do not be uneasy, they shall all be treated as they deserve; no one shall triumph, but the sage and courageous *Finetta*.

When this perfidious Prince had locked up *Pratillia*, he went into all the rooms of the castle, one after another; and, as he found them all open but one, which was fastened in the inside, he concluded for certain, that thither it was *Finetta* had retired. As he had composed a string of compliments, he went to retail out at *Finetta's* door the same things he had made use of to her sisters. But this Princess, who

30 *The Discreet Princess.*

was not a dupe like those her elder sisters; heard him a good while, without making the least answer. At last, finding that he knew she was in that room, she told him, *If it was true that he had so strong and sincere a passion for her, as he would persuade her, she desired he would go down into the garden, and shut the door upon him, and after that she would talk to him as much as he pleased out of the window of that apartment which looked upon the garden.*

Rich-Craft would not agree to this; and as the Princess still resolutely persisted in not opening the door, this wicked Prince mad with impatience, went and got a billet, and broke it open. He found *Finetta* armed with a great hammer, which had been accidentally left in a wardrobe near her chamber.

Emotion raised *Finetta's* complexion; and tho' her eyes sparkled with rage, she appeared to *Rich-Craft* a most enchanting beauty. He would have cast himself at her feet; but she said to him boldly, as he retired, *Prince if you approach me, I will cleave your head with this*

The Discreet Princess. 31

this hammer. What! beautiful Princess (cried out Rich-Craft in his hypocritical tone) does the love I have for you inspire you with such cruel hearted? He began to preach to her a new (but at the farther part of the room) of the violent ardour which the reputation of her beauty and wonderful wit had inspired him with. He added, *that the only motive he had to put on such disguise, was only with respect to offer her his hand and heart: and told her that she ought to pardon, on account of the violence of his passion, his boldness in breaking open her door.* He ended, by indeavering to persuade her, as he had her sisters, *That it was her interest to receive him for her husband as soon as possible.* He told her, moreover, *he did not know whether her sisters were returned; because he was not in any pain about them, having his thought wholly fixed upon her.* The adroit Princess feigned herself intirely pacified, told him, *after that, they would take their measures altogether; but Rich-Craft answered that he could by no means resolve upon that, till she had consented to*

32 *The Discreet Princess.*

marry him; because her sisters would not fail to oppose the match on account of their right and eldership.

Finetta, who with good reason distrusted this Prince, found her suspicions redouble by this answer. She trembled to think what might have happened to her sisters, and resolved to revenge them with the same stroke which might make her avoid a misfortune, like what she judged had befallen them. This young Princess then told Rich-Craft, That she readily consented to marry him; but she was fully persuaded, that marriages which were made at night, were alway unhappy; and therefore desired he would defer the ceremony, of plighting to each other there mutual faith, till the next morning. She added, he might be assured she would not mention a syllable of all this to the Princesses her sisters, and begged him to give her only a little time to say her prayers; that afterwards she would lead him to a chamber where he should have a very good bed, and then she would return to her own room till the morrow morning.

Rich-

Rich-Craft, who was not over and above courageous, seeing *Finetta* still armed with the great hammer, which she played with like a fan, *Rich-Craft*, I say, consented to what the Princess desired, and went away, to give her some time to meditate. He was no sooner gone, but *Finetta* hastened to make a bed over the hole of a sink in one of the rooms of the castle. This room was as handsome as any of the rest; but they threw down the hole of that sink which was very large, all the odours of the castle. *Finetta* put over the hole two weak sticks across, then very handsomely made the bed upon them, and immediately returned to her chamber. A moment after came *Rich-Craft*, and the Princess conducted him into the room where she had made his bed, and retired.

The Prince without undressing, threw himself hastily upon the bed, and his weight having all at once broken the slender sticks, he fell down to the bottom of the sink, without being able to stop himself, making twenty
B 5 bumps

34 *The Discreet Princess.*

bumps in his head, and being all over sorely bruised. The fall of the Prince made a great noise in the pipe as he was descending; and besides, being not far from *Finetta's* chamber, she soon knew her artifice had success she promised herself, and she felt a secret joy, which was extremely agreeable to her. It is impossible to describe the pleasure it gave her to hear him muttering in the sink. He very well deserved that punishment, and the Princess had reason to rejoice at it.

But her joy was not so great as to make her unmindful of her sisters; her first care was to seek for them. It was no hard matter to find out *Princesses; Rich-Craft*, after double-locking that Prince's into her chamber, having left the key in the door, *Finetta* went hastily in; and the noise she made awaked her sister in a start. At the sight of her she was in great confusion. *Finetta* related to her after what manner she had got rid of the wicked prince who was come to insult them. *Pratillia*, at this news, was as one thunder-struck; for

for, spite of her tatling, she was so very wise as to have ridiculously believed every word of what *Rich-Craft* had told her: there are still more such dupes as she in the world.

That Princess, dissembling the excess of her sorrow, went out of her chamber with *Finetta*, to look after *Dronilla*. They went into all the rooms of the castle, but could not find her. At last, *Finetta* bethought herself, that she might be in the apartment of the garden; where, indeed, they found her half dead with despair and faintness; for she had not tasted any thing all that day. The Princesses gave her all necessary assistance: after which they told each other their adventures, which affected *Dronilla* and *Pratillia* with mortal sorrow. Then they went all three to take their repose.

In the mean time *Rich-Craft* passed the night very uncomfortably, and when day came, he was not much the better. This Prince was groping among dismal dungeons, the utmost horror of which he could not see; be-
B 6 cause

36 *The Discreet Princess.*

cause the least glimpse of light could not enter. However, at last, with a great deal of painful struggling, he came to the end of the drain, which ran into a river at a considerable distance from the castle. He found means to make himself heard by some men who were fishing in the river, by whom he was drawn out in such a pickle, as raised compassion in those good people.

He caused himself to be carried to his father's court to get cured; and this disgrace made him take such a strong hatred and aversion to *Finetta* that he thought less on his cure than on revenge.

That Princess passed her time but very sadly; honour was a thousand times dearer to her than life, and the shameful weakness of her sisters had thrown her into so great a despair, that she had much difficulty to get the better of it. At the same time, the ill state of health of those two Princesses, which was the consequence of their unworthy marriages, put, moreover, *Finetta's* constancy to the proof. *Rich-Craft*, who had long been a compleat deceiver, failed not, since this Adventure,

ture, mustering all his wits to make himself in the highest degree a tricking villain; neither the sink, nor the bruises, gave him so much vexation, as did his having been outwitted. He surmised the effects of his two marriages; and to tempt the ailing Princesses, he caused to be carried, under the windows of the castle great tubs full of trees, all laden with fine fruit. *Dronilla* and *Pratilia*, who were often at the windows, could not but see the fruit; and immediately they had a violent desire to eat of it, and they teased *Finetta* to go down in the basket to gather some. The complaisance of that Princess was so great, and being willing to oblige her sisters, she did as they desired her, and brought up the fruit, which they devoured with the utmost greediness.

The next day there appeared fruits of other kinds. This was a fresh temptation for the Princesses, and a fresh instance of *Finetta's* complaisance. But immediately *Rich-Craft's* officers, who were in ambush, and had failed of their design the first time, were not wanting to compleat it the second. They
seized

38 *The Discreet Princess.*

seized upon *Finetta*, and carried her off in the sight of her sisters, who tore their hair for anguish and despair.

Rich-Craft's guards executed so well their orders, that they brought *Finetta* to a country house, where the Prince was for the recovery of his health. As he was transported with fury against this princess, he said to her a hundred brutish things, which she answered always with a firmness, and greatness of soul, worthy a heroin as she was. At last, after having kept her for some time prisoner, he had her brought to the top of a mountain extremely high, whither he followed immediately after. Here it was that he told her, *They were going to put her to death, and after such a manner as would sufficiently revenge all the injuries she had done him.* Then that base Prince very barbarously shewed *Finetta* a barrel stuck in the inside all around with pen-knives, razors, and hooked nails, and told her, *that in order to give her the punishment she deserved, they were going to put her into that vessel, and roll her down from the top of the mountain*

mountain into the valley. Tho' *Finetta* was no *Roman*, she was no more afraid of the punishment than *Regulus* heretofore was at the Sight of a like destiny. This young Princess kept up all her firmness, and presence of mind. *Rich-Craft*, instead of admiring her heroic character, grew more enraged against her than ever, and resolved to hasten her death; and to that end bent himself down to look into the barrel, which was to be the instrument of his vengeance, to examine if it was well provided with all its murdering weapons.

Finetta, who saw her persecutor very attentive in looking into the barrel, lost no time, but very dextrously pushed him into it, and rolled it down the mountain, without giving the Prince any time to know where he was. After this, she ran away, and the Prince's officers, who had seen, with extreme grief, after what cruel manner their master would have treated this amiable Princess, made not the least attempt to stop her; besides, they were so much frightened at what happened

pened to *Rich-Craft*, that they thought of nothing else but stopping the barrel; but their endeavours were all in vain; he rolled down to the bottom of the mountain, where they took him out all over wounded in a thousand places.

This accident of *Rich-Craft* threw the Gentle King and Prince *Bel a voir* into the utmost despair. As for the people, they were not all concerned, *Rich-Craft* being by all extremely hated; and they were even astonished to think, that the young Prince, who had such noble and generous sentiments, could love this unworthy elder brother: But such was the good-nature of this Prince, that he was strongly attached to all who were of the family, and *Rich-Craft* always had the address to shew him such tender marks of affection, that this generous Prince could never have forgiven himself, had he not answered them with interest. *Bel-a-voir* was then touched with excessive grief at the wounds of his brother, and he tried all means to have him perfectly cured; but, notwithstanding all the
care

care taken of him by all about him, nothing could do *Rich-Craft* any good: On the contrary, his wounds seemed every day to grow worse, and to prognosticate he would linger on a long while in misery.

Finetta, after having disingaged herself from this terrible danger, was now got very happily to the Castle, where she had left her sisters, and where it was not long before she had new troubles to encounter with. The two Princesses were brought to bed each of them of a son: at which *Finetta* was exceedingly perplexed. However, the courage of this Princess did not abate: The desire she had to conceal the shame of her sisters, made her resolve to expose herself once more, tho' she very well knew the danger. To bring about her design, she took all the measures prudence could suggest. She disguised herself in man's clothes, put the children of her sisters into boxes, in which she had bored little holes, over against the mouths of these little infants, that they might breathe: She got on horse
back

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back, and took along with her these boxes, and some others; and in this equipage, arrived at the Gentle King's capital city, where *Rich-Craft*, then was.

So soon as *Finetta* came into the city, she was told after what noble manner *Bel-a-voir* did pay for the medicines which were given his brother, which had brought to court all the mountebanks of *Europe*: For, at that time, there were a great many adventurers without business or capacity who gave themselves out for wonderful proficient, having received from Heaven the gift to cure all sorts of distempers. These people, whose whole science consists in nothing but to cheat impudently, found always great credit among the people: They knew how to impose upon them by their extraordinary exterior, and by the odd names they went by. These kinds of doctors never stay in the place of their nativity; and the prerogative of coming from a long way off does with the vulgar, very frequently supply the want of merit.

The

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The ingenious Princess, who knew all this, took a name which was intirely strange to that kingdom: this name was *Sanatio*, Then she gave it out, that the *Chevalier Sanatio* was come to town with wonderful secrets to cure all sorts of wounds, the most dangerous and inveterate. *Bel-a-voir* sent immediately for this pretended knight. *Finnetta* came, made the best empiric in the world, threw out five or six terms of art, with a *Cavalier* air; nothing was wanting. This Princess was surpris'd at the good mein, and agreeable carriages of *Bel-a-voir*; and after having discours'd some time with this Prince about the wounds of *Rich-Craft* she told him, *She would go and fetch a bottle of incomparable water, and in the mean while leave two boxes she had brought thither, which contained some excellents, ointment very proper for the wounded prince.*

Upon saying this, the pretended physician went out, and came no more. They were very impatient at his staying so long. At last, as they were going to send to him to hasten his coming, they

44 *The Discreet Princess.*

they heard the cryings of young children in Prince *Rich-Craft*'s chamber. This surprised every body; for there was no manner of appearance of any children: Some listened attentively, and they found that these cries came from the doctor's boxes.

It was in reality, *Finetta*'s little nephews. This Princess had given them a great deal to eat before she came to the Palace; but as they had been there now a long time, they wanted more, and explained their necessities, by singing this doleful tune. They opened the boxes, and were strangely amazed to find in them actually two little babes very pretty. *Rich-Craft* made no doubt immediately, but this was a new trick of *Finetta*'s. He conceived against her such a rage as is not to be expressed; and his pains so greatly increased, that they concluded he must unavoidably die of those hurts.

Bel-a-voir was penetrated with the most lively sorrow; but *Rich-Craft*, perfidious to his last moments, studied how to abuse the tenderness of his brother.

ther. *You have always loved me, Prince, cried he, and you lament your loss of me: I can have no greater proofs of your love in relation to my life; I am dying; but if ever I have been dear to you, grant this one thing, I beg of you, which I am going to ask of you.*

Bel-a-voir, who, in the condition wherein he saw his brother, found himself capable of refusing him nothing, promised him, with the most terrible oaths, to grant him whatever he should desire. So soon as *Rich-Craft*, heard these oaths, he said to his brother, embracing him, *I die contented, brother, since I am revenged; for that which I beg of you to do for me, is to ask Finetta in marriage, immediately on my decease; you will undoubtedly obtain this wicked Princess; and the moment she shall be in your power, plunge your poniard into her heart.*

Bel-a-voir trembled with horror at these words; he repented the impudence of his oaths; but it was not now the time to unsay them; and he had no mind his repentance should be taken notice of by his brother, who expired soon after. The Gentle King was very sensibly

46 *The Discreet Princess.*

sensibly troubled at his death. His people, far from regretting *Rich-Craft*, were extremely glad that his death secured the succession of the Crown to *Bel-a-visir*, whose merit was dear to all.

Finetta, who had once more happily returned to her sister, heard soon after of the death of *Rich-Craft*; and some time after that, news came to the three Princesses, *That the king their father was come home.* This Prince came in a hurry to the tower; his first care was, to ask to see the glass distaffs. *Dronilla* went and brought that which belonged to *Finetta*, and shewed it to the king; then making a very low curtesy carried it back again to the Place whence she had taken it. *Pratilia* did so too; and *Finetta*, in her turn, brought her distaff: but the king, who was very suspicious, had a mind to see them all three together. No one could shew her's but *Finetta*; and the king fell into such a rage against his two eldest daughters, that, he sent them, that moment, away to the fairy who had given him the distaffs, desiring

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desiring her, *To keep them with her as long as they lived, and punish them according to their deserts.*

To begin the punishment of these Princesses, the fairy led them into a gallery of her enchanted castle, where she had caused to be painted the history of a vast number of illustrious women, who made themselves famous by their virtue and laborious life. By the wonderful effect of fairy art, all these figures moved, and were in action from morning till night. There were seen every where trophies and devices to the honour of these virtuous ladies; and it was no slight mortification for the two sisters, to compare the triumph of these heroins with the despicable situation to which their unhappy prudence had reduced them. To increase their vexation, the fairy told them very gravely, *That if they had been as well employed as those whom they saw in the Picture, they had not fallen into the unworthy errors which ruined them; but that idleness was the mother of all vice, and the source of all their misfortunes.*

48 *The Discreet Princess.*

tunes, The fairy added, *That, to binder them from falling into the like misfortunes; she would give them thorough employment;* and indeed she obliged the Princesses to employ themselves in the coarsest and meanest of work; and, without having any regard to their complexion, she sent them to gather pease in the garden, and pull up the weeds. *Dronilla* could not help falling into despair, at leading a life which was so little conformable to her inclinations, and died with fatigue and vexation. *Pratilia*, who some time after found means to make her escape, by night, out of the Fairy's castle broke her scull against a tree, and died in the arms of some country people.

Finetta's good-nature made her very sensibly grieve for her sisters fate; and, in the midst of these troubles, she was informed, that Prince *Bel-a-voir* had asked her in marriage of the king her father, who had consented to it, without giving her thereof any notice; for in those days, the inclination of parties was the least thing they considered

The Discreet Princess. 49

dered in marriage. *Finetta* trembled at this news; she had reason to fear, lest the hatred which *Rich-Craft* had for her might infect the heart of a brother who was so dear to him; and she had apprehensions, that this young prince married her only to make her a sacrifice to his brother. Full of these disquiets, the Princess went to consult the sage Fairy, who esteemed her as much as she despised *Donilla* and *Pratilia*.

The Fairy would reveal nothing to *Finetta*; she only said to her, *Princess, you are sage and prudent; you would not hitherto have taken such just measures for your conduct, had you not always born in mind, that distrust is the mother of security. Continue to think earnestly on the importance of this maxim, and you will come to be happy, without the assistance of any art.* *Finetta*, not having been able to get any farther light out of the fairy, returned to the palace in extreme agitation.

Some days after, this Princess was married, by an ambassador, in the name of prince *Bel-à-voir*, and she set out to go to her spouse in a magnificent equipage. She made, in the same manner,

C

her

her entries into the Gentle King's two first frontier towns, and at the third she found *Bel-a-voir*, who was come to meet her, by order of his father. Every body was surpris'd to see the sadness of this prince at the approach of a marriage, for which he had shewn so great a desire; the king himself was forced to interpose, and sent him, contrary to his inclination, to meet the Princess.

When *Bel-a-voir* saw her, he was struck with her charms; he made her his compliments, but in so confused a manner, that the two courts, who knew how much wit and gallantry this prince was master of, believed he was so sensibly touched, that, thro' the force of love, he had lost his presence of mind. The whole town shouted for joy, and there was every where concerts of music and fireworks. In short, after a magnificent supper preparations were made for conducting them to their apartment.

Finetta, who was always thinking on the maxim which the fairy had revived in her mind, had a design in her head. This princess had gained one of the women

women, who had the key of the closet belonging to the apartment which wss design'd for her; and she had privately given orders to that woman to carry into the closet some straw, and a bladder, sheep's blood, and the guts of some of those animals which had been dressed for supper. The Princess, on some pretence went into that closet, and made a pupper of the straw, into which she put the guts, and the bladder full of blood: after that she dressed it up in womens night cloths. When *Finetta* had finished this puppet, she returned to her company; and, some time after, they conducted the Princess and her spouse to their apartment. When they had allowed as much time at the toilet as was necessary, the ladies of honour took away the flambeaux and retired. *Finetta* immediately threw the image of straw upon the bed, and went and hid herself in one of the corners of the chamber.

The Prince, after having sigh'd three or four times very loud, drew his sword, and ran it threw the body of the pretended *Finetta*; at the same instant he

52 *The Discreet Princess.*

found the blood trickle all about, and the straw-wife without motion. *What have I done!* cried Bel-a-voir, *what after so many conflicts! after so much weighed with myself, if I should keep my oaths at the expence of a crime! have I taken away the life of a charming Princess I was born to love! her charms ravished me the moment I saw her; and yet I had not the power to free myself from an oath which a brother possessed with fury, had exacted from me by an unworthy surprise! Ah! heavens! could any one so much as dream to punish a woman for having too much virtue! Well! Rich-Craft, I have satisfied thy unjust vengeance; but now I will revenge Finetta, in her turn, by my death. Yes, beautiful Princess, my sword shall——* By these words the Princess, understanding that the Prince, who in his transport had let fall his sword, was feeling for it, in order to thrust it thro' his body, was resolved he should not be guilty of such a folly, and therefore cried out, *My Prince, I am not dead; the goodness of your disposition made me divine your repentance; and, by an innocent cheat, I have hindered you from committing the worst of crimes.*

Upon

Upon which she related to *Bel-a-voir* the fore-sight she had in relation to the figure of straw. The Prince, all transported to find *Finetta* alive, admired the prudence she was mistress of on all occasions, had infinite obligations to her for preventing him from committing a crime, which he could not think on without horror, and did not comprehend, how he could be so weak as not to see the nullity of those wicked oath which had been exacted from him by artifice.

However, if *Finetta* had not been ever persuaded, that *distrust is the mother of security*, she had been killed, and her death been the cause of that of *Bel-a-voir*: and then, afterwards people would have reasoned at leisure upon the oddness of this Prince's sentiments. Happy prudence and presence of mind! which preserv'd this princely pair from the most dreadful misfortunes, for a destiny the sweetest and most delightful. They always retained for each other a very great tenderness, and passed thro' a long succession of happy days, in so much felicity and glory, as is impossible for the most able pen or tongue to say.

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Your ladyship has now heard the wonderful history of Princess *Finetta* which is not only very famous, but, as tradition informs us, also of very great antiquity, which assures us, that the *Troubadours*, or storio graphers of *Provence*, invented *Finetta* a long while before *Abelard*, or the celebrated count *Tibaud* of *Champagne*, obliged the world with their romances.

It is certain, that these kinds of fables contain abundance of good morality, and for that reason ought to be told to little children in their very infancy, to inspire them betimes with virtue so eminently brilliant in your ladyship. I know not, Madam, whether you ever heard *Finetta* spoken of at that age; but for my part:

I.

*A hundred times and more, to me, of old,
Instead of fables made of beasts and fowl,
Of cocks and bulls, the bat and owl,
The morals of this tale, my nurse has told.
Here with one little glance we see
A Prince reduc'd to utmost misery:
A dangerous Prince, whose sable mind
To perpetrate most horrid crimes inclin'd,
O'erwhelm'd profoundly low
In endless shame, irreparable woe.*

II.

II.

*Here too, as in a magick glass, is shown
How two imprudent ladies, royal born,
Whom every princely virtue should adorn,
Of their high character unworthy grown;
By passing all their time in Indolence,
Lost to all honour's noble sense,
And to strict virtue having small regard,
Fell horribly to acts of foulest shame,
And stained indeliably their royal name,
Receiving for their crime a prompt and just
reward.*

III.

*But if wee see in this delightful tale,
The Vicious punish'd, so we likewise see
Virtue triumphant, and prevail,
Loaded with glorious spoils of victory.
After a thousand incidents which none
Could e'er foresee, or in the least surmise:
Finetta, prudent, sage, discreet and wise,
And Bel-a-voir, that gen'rous prince serene,
Bless'd in the love of his beloved queen,
In perfect glory mount the royal throne.*

IV.

*In fact, these tales strike deeper on the mind,
Afford diversion and instruction more,
Then*

56 *The Discreet Princess.*

*Then those invented heretofore,
Or in the modern mint of fable coin'd
Of beasts and birds, of gnats and flies,
And all those inconsistent reveries,
(A Gallimowsfry strange, God knows)
Of monkey Barbers, monkey Beaus,
The graduate AIs, and proud exalted Pie,
With little doctor Elephant so sly,
And all what else we Fabulists invent
Retail'd in pretty sterile chiming cant.*

V.

*I can't but own I take delight extreme
(And all young people do the same)
Reading or hearing of these kinds of tales,
So much their sweet simplicity prevails:
But more diffusive would their beauties rise
Of more extent their moral virtues prove,
Did noble ladies, in their families,
Admit them audience, and there lecture love.
The mystic meanings, which their Tour
contains,
Like vital gold lock'd up in min'ral veins
Those in his tales by ÆSOP wrap so well,
Certainly equal; and, some say, excel.*



FINIS.